619
675
578
*613
626
582

could not afford to risk such large scale conflict and so he withdrew his offer of marriage to the brothers. After this, as a display of authority and an attempt to maintain something of the alliance between their group and the Qit'an, the 'Aishaibi leaders made the public announcement that the girl could marry anyone else, but not the son of 'Umda Ziyad.

619
675
*613

The various sets of authority relations operative in the al-Qasr area are obvious from this account, but they will be better defined as the discussion proceeds. Here, I only wanted to make clear that the relationship between Sa'adi and Marabit is one based upon contract and local contiguity, and reinforced by cognation. There is no unilinear basis for the relationship and no attempt to fit it into a "unilinear genealogical mould." The structural differentiation between [582] Sa'adi and Marabit seems to reflect a dominant-subjective relationship, in the sense discussed by Weber (1947) and Southall (1956), but its possible class overtones are played down by the fact that there are normally no objections to intermarrying between groups. The Bedouin of al-Qasr say, [851] "what is the difference, the children from such a marriage will be Sa'adi anyhow?"

619
*613

The Sa'adi-Marabit differentiation is relatively unimportant for a study of al-Qasr itself, since the Marabit number is so small--one lineage consisting of five brothers and their families. The contrast between Sa'adi and Marabit, secular and sacred tribes, becomes more important for a

593 The daughter and wife roles are also subject to the dominant role of father in al-Qasr Bedouin society. The father has virtually the right of life and death over his daughter in certain situations. But in no case does he have this right over his wife. The differentiation in right here 593 *613 is again a matter of the authority principle operating within the framework of the lineage system. A man's daughter belongs • [851] to his patrilineage or authority group while his wife belongs to the authority group of her father. There is an obvious [582] exception to this statement about Bedouin society, for given the practice of parallel-cousin marriage a man and his wife can belong to the same authority group, the same tertiary 593 group. Even so, only the father has the right of life and death over the girl who is his daughter. The Bedouins say, "The bones of the girl belong to the father." There are two 593 situations in which a father may rightfully put his daughter 684 to death: when she is found guilty of pre-marital intercourse (loss of virginity), or if it is proved that she has had any extra-marital sexual activity. In either case, if the husband were to kill the girl he would be guilty of murder and his group would have to forfeit blood-money or be threatened with retaliation. I heard of no such actual cases.

593 The father's major duty toward his daughter is to 684 provide her with "a good marriage." This, of course, parallels his duty toward his son and emphasizes that a father is con-

586 Naturally, according to the rule of patriliny, all
•851 children from a marriage belong to the husband and become
* 613 members of his lineage. Should divorce occur while a woman is nursing, she will take the child with her and it will be returned after weaning. Sometimes the husband will permit the wife to keep one child--always a girl--in order "to keep her company."

587 The practice of the sororate has been noted. The Bedouins also believe that "a man should marry his brother's widow so that she will have someone to help her with the children." But I have no data on the frequencies of these practices. When I gathered my data on marriage, my informants
12 would give me only the name of the tribe or lineage into which
58 a man married, and never did I get the name of a man's wife.
[829] (One lineage in al-Qasr, entirely refused to give me data on genealogy or marriage because, as one leader said, "it is not decent to speak of these things with people.") Sororal
595 polygny is forbidden (Quran IV:23), and the Bedouins say that a man cannot marry more than one bint 'amm. Marriage
182 practices, such as sororate and levirate, I interpret as
[587] patterns which maintain structural continuity and political advantage. The custom of permitting a man to marry only
[582] one of his father's brother's daughters may be seen as a precaution against intensifying authority relations and the degree of segmentation.

Cases

835 devoured by wild animals, the girl was "given"[6] to a close cousin who had
561 shot his sister. Both now reside with an enemy tribal section. The two acts
684 were equated. They were similar to the extent that both created a situation which defied institutional resolution. The culprits were exorcised. The girl's lover remains with his group — the odium for the male is incomparably less than for the female, since, while maternity is easy to establish, paternity is frequently shrouded in doubt — and during the months I lived with this particular group, there was never a mention of the affair. It was as if "nothing had happened."

829 If asked why these two events cause such profound distress, the answers
578 the Bedouin give are twofold: they can do nothing about them, and they
613 cause split. By split in this context they mean split in the lineage; split in the case of homicide because it may lead to a demand for blood-money which
[682] is payable only between corporations, and split in the case of incest because
[684] it causes chaos in relationships. Marriage, in one sense, their reasoning
581 runs, is similar, for it too causes split. Whatever may be the analytic strength
829 of the arguments that homicide and incest precipitate splitting, the argu-
613 ment that marriage does so is spurious. In what sense can marriage mean split? Bedouin men marry "so that we may beget many sons, to make a big lineage later on." The worst fate that can befall a man as a result of his son's marriage is that he, in later generations, will become the focal point in a series of branching descent lines. The alternative — that his sons remain unmarried — can only mean that his name would disappear through want of successors to carry it on, which is one of the greatest evils which can befall a man, according to Bedouin sentiment: better split than oblivion. If the key to the interpretation of the father's attitude to his son's marriage is not
581 that it causes split, it must lie elsewhere in their relationship. What mar-
585 riage does is alter the distribution of authority between father and son. In
593 order to pursue this, it is necessary first to clarify the types of authority involved, and then assess them in a post-marital situation.

The Division of Authority Between the Family and the Corporation

554
•851 Politically, a person's status is determined for him at birth. At this time a man has the right to accept or deny paternity. Denial is tantamount to an accusation of adultery by his wife. In practice, once a wife has given birth to a male child, whatever doubts people may harbour regarding paternity, the husband accepts the child as his. "The boy for the bed," is a saying often heard among the Bedouin; but it remains the husband's prerogative to invest
[837] the child with legitimacy, hence, political status. Only if a husband becomes aware that he is publicly considered a cuckold, or if he catches his wife and a lover *in flagrante delicto*, is he at all likely to take action. Otherwise he may

[585] [6] A marriage is illegal unless it is accompanied by an agreement to transfer wealth
[581] to the girl's father.

6: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1965 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

indeed welcome unfaithfulness on his wife's part. If a man is very old, and his wife very young, it is likely that she will entertain lovers; if a man leaves camp for a long absence his wife may not remain chaste. In both cases, if the liaisons lead to the birth of a child, particularly a male, the husband greets the news with unrestrained enthusiasm — "praise be to God," as their saying goes. Incapacity[7] to produce offspring, if a husband is convinced of it, may lead him to delegate a kinsman to serve his wife for procreative purposes: he has the legal authority, as husband, to do so, and to require his wife to submit, for the only alternative, if he is not to die without "issue," is to "take" a son from his brother and fulfill the obligations towards this boy required of a pater, namely, attend to his circumcision, provide him with teaching in the Koran (a duty neglected by most) and give him the wealth with which to marry.

Granting the acceptance of paternity, whatever the circumstances of conception, a male child, *ipso facto*, acceeds to membership of a corporation, and is subject to the authority of that group in a number of matters. In many situations it would appear that a son is under the father's political control. At a moot, the son, if he speaks at all, will do so only to corroborate his father. Discussions among men in a small camp evoke a similar pattern of behaviour. Until the father becomes senile or dies, a son cannot publicly pursue an independent course, but he desists by virtue of his relationships with his father *qua* pater, not because of his father's political power to coerce. All men of a corporation, in any event, "speak with one word" at a moot, and a son, by his assent to the common view, also supports his father; in so doing he yields to the political authority of his corporation, and not that of his father.

Membership in the corporation invests a man with other privileges and duties. Protection against external enemies comes within the corporation's jurisdiction, although in a particular situation, the father may well be the person who dispenses it. Complimentarily, if a man commits an offense against a person not of his group, whatever private thoughts his father may have about the act, the responsibility lies not on his shoulders but on the group, and he is compelled to share this responsibility equally with all other members. For example, if a son commits a homicide the father bears the same legal responsibility for the act, and is under obligation to contribute the same share of blood-money as he would be if the act had been perpetrated by any male of the group other than his son. Even in a narrower field of relations between father and son the group exercises its authority. Acting as pater, a man may punish his son, physically or otherwise; he may not do so to the point of injury, for personal injury comes within the legitimate sphere of the corporation. A man's "bone" belongs to his group; he is an in-

[7] Impotency is a special case, because it is dishonourable for a woman to remain wife to an impotent man. She cannot divorce him, but her father can insist on a witnessed test of impotency and, if it is proven, the husband is compelled to divorce her. Barrenness, obviously, is a different matter.

band is required to take gifts to his mother-in-law in recognition of the fact that she nourished his wife as an infant (the literal meaning of the word used for this gift is "milk"). A return visit is made and gifts are given to the daughter. When the first child is born an animal is presented by the affines, and if the child is a male, the gift may be several sheep, or even a few camels if the father-in-law is very wealthy. Formal exchange of gifts continue, but, in addition, informal transfers are made. Moreover, if relations between a man and his father-in-law develop favourably, it is not uncommon for a young husband, during the early years of marriage, to move away from his father and pitch his tent alongside that of his father-in-law. Marriage gives a son affinal relations of his own. Affinity can alleviate the dead weight of paternal authority.

It is suggested that the crisis the marriage of a son assumes for a father is the shift it entails in the distribution of authority. This is borne out by other details in the marriage ceremony referred to earlier. Ordinarily, young men dare not sing within earshot of their senior agnates. Far from allowing obscenities, agnates of the ascending generation would not allow even a mention of women to be made by young men, in their presence. In a group consisting of young men and an agnate, I chanced to use the noun for woman and immediately my tent was cleared of all but the senior agnate. At a wedding the young men revel in their lewd songs and shout their obscenities for all to hear. The senior agnates stand aside and make a show of ignoring the proceedings. And well they may, for each marriage is a challenge to the exclusive authority they have enjoyed; each nuptial tent is an invasion of the domain of which they have been undisputed masters. Marriage is the only occasion when the men of one generation can clap and sing their defiance of an older one, and give warning of the changes which must be accommodated however great the pretence that nothing has happened.

Marriage ceremonies dramatise the clash between adjacent generations over the distribution of certain forms of authority. If this authority is as overwhelming as has been suggested, and if it is so deeply resented, how is it that life is endurable for juniors? Relationships between junior and senior agnates are so restrictive that they almost amount to what Professor Fortes has suggested I view as a form of avoidance relationships. Juniors must always defer, they must obey commands promptly, they serve their seniors, they must accept a lead when it is given and the restrictions on conversations exclude all reference to women, marriage or sex. These are not simply a set of general guides for behaviour, they are rigidly applied rules, deviation from which is countered with rebuke or greater severity. It would appear from this

---

many African societies is that wealth is transferred. Obviously, in societies where the rules of exogamy compel a dispersion of links outside a man's own clan, what is involved in this transfer of wealth cannot be sociologically similar to one in which marriage to the first cousin on either side is permitted.